

Monday, June 25, 2012

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico's Third District announced today that he has been named Ranking Member of the House Natural Resource Committee's Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs. Luján, who is serving in his second term, will replace Congressman Dan Boren of Oklahoma as Ranking Member.

"It is an honor to be named to this important position that is critical for the many states that are home to native communities," Congressman Luján said. "As Ranking Member, I look forward to building on my efforts to strengthen an effective government-to-government relationship that respects the sovereignty of Native American tribes. From protecting sacred sites to improving the health and educational opportunities for Indian Country, it is important that we work with tribes and pueblos across the country to build a stronger future for Native Americans."

"Congressman Luján has been a strong advocate for tribal communities during his time in the House," said Congressman Ed Markey, Ranking Member of the Natural Resources Committee. "As a member of the Subcommittee, he has been a powerful voice, not only for the needs of Native Americans in his district, but for all native communities, and I know that he will continue these important efforts in this new role."

As the top ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee, Luján will continue his efforts to strengthen tribal communities. His Northern New Mexico district is home to 17 tribes; 15 Pueblos, the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation. Luján was born and raised in Nambe, a small community in Northern New Mexico nestled between two pueblos. He is also a member of the Native American Caucus and has worked to improve health care for tribal communities through the permanent authorization of the Indian HealthCare Services. He has also brought important attention to protecting sacred sites and supported funding for critical infrastructure investments in Indian Country, including broadband and water infrastructure.

As the subcommittee with exclusive jurisdiction over Indian and Alaska Native issues in the House, the Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs oversees matters ranging from natural resources and land management to Indian health care, tribal criminal justice, and renewable energy development on tribal lands. The Subcommittee has specific jurisdiction over the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of Interior.

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